

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 PM-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 NASA-04 SCI-06 AEC-11 SAJ-01

TRSE-00 DRC-01 SCEM-02 /161 W
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R 141409Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5459

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

EC BRUSSELS 9019

UNCLAS PARIS 31946

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH

SUBJECT: PHENIX FAST BREEDER GOES INTO OPERATION

1. THE PHENIX FAST BREEDER REACTOR WAS COUPLED TO THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL GRID DECEMBER 13 AT 1700. THE PHENIX JOINS THE SOVIET CHEVTCHENKO BREEDER AS THE ONLY TWO OF THEIR CAPACITY IN OPERATION. THE PHENIX IS NOW PRODUCING ONLY 15 MEGAWATTS. IT'S OUTPUT WILL GRADUALLY BE RAISED IN NEXT THREE OR FOUR MONTHS TO NEAR ITS MAXIMUM CAPACITY OF 250 MEGAWATTS. THE PHENIX IS REPORTED TO HAVE COST 650 MILLION FRANC (ABOUT \$130 MILLION). THE NEXT MAJOR STEP IN THE FRENCH FAST BREEDER PROGRAM WILL BE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 1200 MEGAWATT "SUPER-PHENIX" BY A FRENCH, GERMAN AND ITALIAN CONSORTIUM.

2. MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT CHARBONNEL COMMENTED, "THE PHENIX PLACES US TODAY WITH THE USSR AT THE HEAD OF THE NUCLEAR NATIONS WHO ARE TRYING TO DEVELOP THIS SYSTEM OF FAST BREEDERS. THE PHENIX HAS BEEN REALIZED UNDER THE DIRECTION
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OF THE CEA IN A VERY SHORT TIME PERIOD, ON THE ORDER OF FOUR

YEARS, FOR A PRICE VERY MUCH LESS TO THAT CONNECTED WITH THE GERMAN AND AMERICAN PROGRAMS. PHENIX APPEARS AS PROOF OF THE FRENCH NUCLEAR MATURITY." NOTING THE NEED TO PUT THE FAST BREEDER ON A VIABLE COMMERCIAL BASIS, CHARBONNEL ADDED: "A REAL EUROPEAN NUCLEAR MARKET MUST BE CREATED. IT IS A TURN TO BE TAKEN ON THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW TECHNOLOGY SINCE ONLY A VAST MARKET WILL ENABLE THESE BREEDER REACTORS TO REACH THE LEVEL OF COMPETITIVENESS WHERE THEY CAN TAKE THEIR PLACE ALONG SIDE THE CLASSICAL NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS NOW CONSTRUCTED IN LARGE SERIES."IRWIN

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